

**BYLAWS FOR
THE NORTHRIDGE WEST NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

Certified on October 26, 2004
Bylaws as Amended on July 13, 2010 and Approved on October 29, 2010

**ARTICLE I
COUNCIL NAME**

The name of this neighborhood council shall be the Northridge West Neighborhood Council (NWNC), an officially recognized council that is part of the Los Angeles citywide system of neighborhood councils.

**ARTICLE II
PURPOSE, MISSION AND POLICY**

A. The **PURPOSE** of the NWNC is to provide a forum for Stakeholders to address issues related to their quality of life. NWNC shall serve as an advocate for issues of concern to our community, and shall have such powers as granted by the Los Angeles City Charter, or by the Mayor and City Council of the city of Los Angeles.

B. The **MISSION** of the NWNC is:

1. To provide an inclusive open forum for public discussion of community issues, and to advise the City of Los Angeles on issues concerning City governance, the needs of this neighborhood, the delivery of City services, and on matters of a citywide nature, as they relate to the Stakeholders of the NWNC.
2. To initiate, execute, and support projects for the physical, social, and cultural improvement of western portion of Northridge. Likewise we should advocate against any project which appears detrimental to the welfare of our Stakeholders.
3. To enhance the sense of community and the level of neighborhood involvement within the boundaries of the NWNC.
4. To facilitate communication between the City of Los Angeles and Community Stakeholders on issues of concern to the community and/or the Stakeholders.

C. The **POLICY** of the neighborhood council shall be:

1. To respect the dignity and expression of views of all individuals, groups, and organizations involved in this neighborhood council.
2. To remain non-partisan in regards to candidates and political party affiliation and inclusive in our operations including, but not limited to the election process for the governing body and committee members.
3. To utilize the Early Notification System inform members of our neighborhood council of matters involving the City of Los Angeles and our community in a way that is tailored to provide opportunities to participate in the decision-making process.
4. To encourage all Stakeholders to participate in activities of this neighborhood council.
5. To prohibit discrimination against any individual or group in our operations on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, income or political affiliation.
6. To have fair, open, and transparent procedures for the conduct of our council business.
7. To establish procedures for communicating with all neighborhood council Stakeholders on a regular basis in a manner ensuring that information is disseminated evenly and in a timely manner.

ARTICLE I11 DEFINITIONS

- A. **COUNCIL MEMBERS or COUNCIL:** shall mean an elected governing body (BOARD) within the meaning of that term as set forth in the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE).
- B. **NWNC** shall mean the Northridge West Neighborhood Council.
- C. **DEPARTMENT or DONE** shall mean the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, or any successor agency within the City of Los Angeles.
- D. **MEMBERSHIP** shall mean all individuals identified as Stakeholders.
- E. **PLAN** refers to the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils.

F. **OFFICIAL ACTION** shall mean any action which results in Council approval or disapproval of any resolutions, positions, or decisions with respect to items of interest.

G. **STAKEHOLDER** shall mean all persons who live, work, or own property in the neighborhood and also those who declare a stake in the neighborhood and affirm the factual basis for it.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

A. The NWNC membership shall be diverse and open to all persons meeting the definition of a Stakeholder.

B. No dues, fees, or assessments shall be required for membership in the NWNC.

ARTICLE V NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

The NWNC includes a geographic area with the following boundaries.

The southern side of the 118 Freeway shall be the northern boundary; the northern side of Nordhoff Street and Nordhoff Way shall be the southern boundary; the western side of Reseda Boulevard shall be the eastern boundary; and the eastern side of Corbin Avenue shall be the western boundary.

ARTICLE VI COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. Thirteen (13) members representing diverse sectors of the community shall constitute the Council. The categories of Council membership shall be as follows:

1. **AT-LARGE:** Four (4) council members shall be elected "at-large", meaning they fit no specific stakeholder group but must qualify as residing within the confines of the NWNC, as identified in Article V.
2. **OPEN AT-LARGE:** One (1) council member shall be elected who is not required to reside within the geographic boundaries of the NWNC, but who can profess an interest in the community's affairs.
3. **GENERAL BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE:** There shall be two (2) seats for this stakeholder group. These council members shall own or work for a business that is physically located within the geographic boundaries of the NWNC, or persons legally operating a business from their primary residence within the same boundaries.

4. **COMMUNITY AND FAITH BASED ORGANIZATION:** This council member shall be a part of or regularly attend community or faith-based organizations, (e.g. neighborhood watch groups, service organizations, volunteer groups, veterans' organizations, churches, temples, or mosques) that regularly meet within the geographic boundaries of the NWNC.

5. **RENTER:** This council member shall rent and reside in a home, condominium, townhouse, or apartment within the geographic boundaries of the NWNC.

6. **SENIOR:** There shall be two (2) seats for this stakeholder group. These council members shall be stakeholders residing within that specific geographic district as described in Article V above, and be at least 62 years of age.

7. **HOMEOWNER:** There shall be two (2) seats for this stakeholder group. These council members shall own and reside in a home, condominium, or townhouse within the geographic boundaries of the Northridge West Neighborhood Council.

B. The primary duties of Council Members will be to govern the NWNC and carry out its objectives.

C. Council Members shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years.

D. The **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** of the Council shall consist of five (5) positions: President, Vice-President for Administration, Vice-President for Communication and Outreach, Treasurer, and Secretary.

1. **PRESIDENT:** The President shall preside at all meetings and direct all activities of the Council; chair Executive Committee meetings; represent the interests of the NWNC before the City Council and City Departments, boards and commissions, or delegate such representation as warranted; serve as a spokesperson for the Council in the press and before other neighborhood councils and or the public; and appoint Committee chairs as necessary subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the council.

2. **VICE-PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION:** This individual shall serve as President in that person's absence and be responsible for the operational, administrative, and logistical needs of the council. Other specific duties may be determined by the Council.

3. **VICE-PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH:** This individual shall coordinate the Council's external communications and outreach activities. Other specific duties may be determined by the Council.

4. **TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall maintain the records of the Council's finances and book of accounts; shall have charge and custody of all funds of the Council; and shall comply with the requirements of Article XI regarding financial accountability.

5. **SECRETARY:** The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and prepare and post agendas for said meetings, and provide access to all stakeholders to copies of these items. An alternate Secretary may be appointed to act in place of the primary, as needed. If the alternate is not a member of the Council, he/she shall not have any rights as a Council Member, such as the right to vote.

E. Duties of officers may be further defined by Council rules to be prepared by the Council at a later date.

F. Executive Committee positions shall be elected to a two (2) year term to conform to the Bi-annual Election Procedures instituted by the Los Angeles City Council and DONE in December of 2007. After such elections, the first of which will occur in June of 2008, the Council Members, both current and newly elected, shall select the new Executive Committee members at the first meeting after the election. This meeting should be held no later than one month after the election date.

G. **VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE:** In the event that an Executive Committee officer has engaged in conduct detrimental to the interests of the NWNC, has failed to discharge the duties of the office, or has become unable to discharge such duties due to permanent or temporary incapacity, a Council member may introduce a motion of no confidence in the specified officer.

1. The motion shall be heard at the subsequent council meeting to be held the following month. The officer who is the subject of the no confidence motion shall have the opportunity to speak at the meeting prior to the vote. The no confidence motion shall require the affirmative vote of 75% of the Council member positions present for approval.

2. Upon an affirmative vote, new Executive Committee elections for the position being vacated shall be held at the next regularly scheduled monthly council meeting. In the event the President is the subject of the no confidence vote, the Vice-President for Administration shall serve until this election takes place.

3. The subject of the no confidence action shall remain on the Council following the affirmative vote, unless the removal or resignation procedures in Article VII have also been invoked.

H. The council shall create a system for the election, selection, or appointment of committee, sub-committee or ad-hoc committee members as the need arises. These bylaws may be amended to reflect the creation of any permanent or standing committee.

**ARTICLE VII
RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

A. A council member may resign in writing to the President or Secretary.

B. A council member may be removed from office by the submission of a written petition which includes:

1. The identity of the council member to be removed.
2. A description, in detail, of the reason for removal. Council members may not be removed due to a substantive disagreement about a council decision. Removal must be based on either:
 - a. A good faith determination that the council member has failed to observe the NWNC bylaws, rules adopted by the council, rules of conduct, or any civility code adopted by the Department, or has represented the Council without prior approval of the board,
 - or
 - b. Unexcused absence at two (2) consecutive council meetings, or three (3) council meetings cumulatively in a fiscal year. The council shall adopt rules to define an excused absence.
3. Signatures of at least 100 stakeholders.

If the written petition meets the aforementioned qualifications, the secretary shall have the matter placed on the agenda for a vote at the next Council meeting. Removal of the identified council member shall require an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the council members present. The council member who is the subject of the removal action shall not take part in the discussion or vote on this matter, but shall be permitted to speak before the council prior to the vote. If the vote for removal is affirmative, then the position shall be determined vacant. Enforcement of this removal provision is subject to consultation with the NWNC's legal counsel, the Office of the City Attorney, throughout this process.

C. Vacancy on the board.

1. Any stakeholder interested in filling a vacant seat of the Council shall submit a written application to the Secretary.
2. The Secretary will forward the names of all applicants qualified to fill any vacant seat, as determined by their stakeholder status and categories,

to the President.

3. The President shall appoint an applicant to fill any vacancy, subject to the majority confirmation of the Council. This ability to appoint shall extend to appointments due to the non-filling of any board seat during any regularly scheduled election.

4. The vacant seat so filled in this process shall be filled by the selected applicant until the next scheduled Bi-annual election. In no event shall a vacant seat be filled where the next election is scheduled to be held within 90 days from the date of the first application to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE VIII ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. Pursuant to new election procedures instituted by the Los Angeles City Council on December 18, 2007, after acceptance of the Neighborhood Council Review Commission (NCRC) recommendation #45, the City Clerk shall organize and run all Neighborhood Council (NC) elections. The elections shall be held every two (2) years in every even numbered year, in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the City Clerk. In order to ensure the continuity of the governing body of the NWNC, certain changes as enumerated below, shall be required. Notice should also be made that any reference to "District", as previously utilized by the NWNC, shall be eliminated from any current or future position.

B. Starting in 2010, future elections will consist of seven (7) council members who are elected and seated (and every four (4) years thereafter) will hold positions as follows: two (2) General Business, two (2) At-Large Representatives, one (1) Homeowner, one (1) Renter and one (1) Community and Faith Based Organization Representative.

C. The remaining six (6) board members, who will be up for reelection in 2012 will consist of the following positions: one (1) Homeowner, one (1) Open At-Large Representative, two (2) Seniors, and two (2) At-Large Representative. Thereafter, the term of office for each position filled during each subsequent election shall be for a period of four (4) years.

D. The positions identified in Section VIII, A, numbers 1 and 2, comprise the thirteen (13) Council positions currently authorized for the NWNC.

E. The positions up for election in the scheduled election in 2010 shall be comprised of those representatives enumerated in Section VIII, A, 1, above, and shall be for a period of four (4) years. This election method ensures a smooth transition from one Council to the next, with half of the Council members being replaced every 2 years.

F. During the first scheduled council meeting following each City Clerk conducted election, the then newly constituted Council shall select members for the Executive Committee, whose members shall then serve for a period of 2 years, until the next scheduled election.

G. Each qualified stakeholder who is at least 16 years of age prior to the date of the election shall be entitled to vote for any of the open positions on the ballot. All qualified and validated persons shall be considered voting stakeholders in the NWNC.

H. The affirmation of qualification may require verification of said stake. Furthermore, each stakeholder class within the NWNC's boundaries has the ability to vote and run for office on the board.

ARTICLE IX MEETINGS

All meetings, as defined by the Ralph M. Brown Act shall be noticed and conducted in accordance with this act.

A. Meetings of the Council shall be held at least six (6) times per year and no less than once each calendar quarter.

B. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at a pre-designated location in Northridge and noticed on agendas pursuant to the Brown Act. Special meetings, joint meetings, and other meetings may be held at a different location. Council meetings shall be open to all stakeholders. Council rules shall be developed and adopted by a majority of the Council and can be changed or modified by the same entity.

C. Notification of all meetings shall be posted at each location submitted in the Application for Certification, and other commonly frequented locations throughout the Northridge West Neighborhood Council area, as well as in one local publication tailored to reach the largest number of identifiable stakeholders in the NWNC area. Presence of at least seven (7) Council member positions shall constitute a quorum. Once a quorum is present, official action may be taken if a majority of the *member's* present pass said motion. Other rules for the conduct and decorum may be established by the Council and reflected in Rules for Conduct.

D. The Council may reconsider and amend its action on items listed on the agenda if that reconsideration takes place immediately following the original action, or at the next regular meeting. The Council, on either of these two dates shall: (1) make a Motion for Reconsideration and if approved, (2) hear the matter and take action. If the motion to reconsider an action is to be scheduled for the next meeting following the original action, then the two items shall be placed on the agenda for that meeting. These two items are (1) a Motion for Reconsideration on the described matter and (2) a "Proposed" Action should the motion is approved. A motion to reconsider may only be made by a council member who previously voted on the prevailing side of the original action taken. If a motion for reconsideration is not made on the date the action was taken, then a Council member on the prevailing side must submit a memorandum to the Secretary *identifying* the matter to be reconsidered and a brief explanation of the reason for requesting such reconsideration. The aforesaid shall all be in compliance with the Brown Act.

E. The neighborhood council shall follow all federal, state, and city laws, and if not inconsistent, the bylaws, then if not inconsistent, any standing rules adopted by the Council and then the parliamentary authority provided by Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE X AMENDING BYLAWS

One of the Council Members or a stakeholder may propose amendments to these Bylaws during the public comment period of a Council meeting.

A. A proposal to amend these bylaws must be formalized in writing and submitted to the Secretary, or person responsible for preparing the agenda for the next regular meeting.

B. The proposed amendment will be noticed on the agenda for public discussion and a vote at the next Council meeting.

C. Any amendment or adjustment to these Bylaws requires a 2/3 vote of the Council Members present. Thereafter, and within 14 days after a vote recommending amendment or adjustment to amend the Bylaws, an Application to Change or Adjust Bylaws shall be submitted to DONE along with a copy of the existing Bylaws for review and approval by DONE all in accordance with Article V (3) of the Plan. No amendment shall be valid, final, or effective until approved by DONE.

ARTICLE XI FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A. The Treasurer of the NWNC shall oversee and be charged with the full custody and control of all Council funds and assets.

B. The Treasurer shall establish and oversee a system of bookkeeping and accounting for the Council that complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and conforms to all applicable local, state, or federal laws. The Treasurer may request authorization from the Council to retain a financial professional to assist in creating a bookkeeping and annual accounting system. The Treasurer may also request the assistance of DONE when implementing this system. The Treasurer, however, shall be ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the system and for the protection of all Council assets.

C. The Council's financial statements, books, and accounts shall be open for inspection and copying by any member of the public upon a written request to the Council. The Council shall establish fair and open procedures to permit such inspection within a reasonable time. Any copying of financial records will be performed by an established copy service and the charge for such service shall be borne by the person or entity requesting the copies.

D. The Treasure shall make a report to the Council on the Council's finances at every regular meeting of the Council. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for preparing or coordinating the preparation of a financial statement for DONE. The Treasure will submit to DONE account statements no less than once and no more than twice per year, the date(s) of which shall be

prescribed by DONE. The Treasurer shall also coordinate and cooperate with DONE on establishing a process and/or system by which the Council's finances and book of accounts can be reviewed by DONE pursuant to the Plan for the Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils.

ARTICLE XI GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Any grievance by a stakeholder must be submitted in writing to the Secretary. Within ten (10) days of receipt, the Secretary will refer the grievance to a grievance panel comprised of five (5) Stakeholders who are randomly selected by the President from a list of Stakeholders who have expressed an interest in serving from time-to-time on such a grievance panel. Within ten (10) days of the referral, the Secretary will coordinate a time and place for the panel to meet with the person(s) submitting the grievance to discuss the basis for the grievance and the desired outcome.

B. Within thirty (30) days of the panel meeting with the person(s) submitting the grievance, the panel members will conduct any investigation necessary in order to reach agreement on the panel's recommendation to the Council. A report will be written and forwarded to the Secretary outlining the panel's collective recommendations for resolving the grievance. This item shall then be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Council meeting. The Council may receive a copy of the panel's report and recommendations prior to the meeting, but the matter will not be discussed among Council Members until the matter is heard by the existing and present Council at a meeting, pursuant to the Brown Act.

C. This formal grievance process is not intended to apply to Stakeholders who simply disagree with an Official Action taken by the Council. Those grievances can be aired at Council meetings. This grievance process is intended to address matters involving procedural disputes, e.g., the Council's failure to comply with its rules or these Bylaws, or its failure to comply with the City's Charter, the Plan, and/or state or federal law.

D. In the event that a grievance cannot be resolved through this grievance process, the matter may be referred to DONE for consideration or dispute resolution in accordance with the Plan.

ARTICLE XII ETHICS

A. The Council, its representatives, and all Stakeholders will refrain from violating Council Rules and shall be subject to any and all applicable sections of the City of Los Angeles Governmental Ethics Ordinance (L.A.M.C. Section 49.5.1) and will abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Attendance of a DONE or City Ethics Commission financial disclosure/ethics training will be required of all Council Members at the next available training session after election to the Board or at a convenient time mutually agreed upon by the Council member and DONE.

B. The Council is committed to developing a system where pertinent information transmitted through the City's Early Notification System will be disseminated or made available to every Stakeholder of this Council in a timely manner.